

Memoirs of Gladiolus

by vakiromii

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Summary: In which an unhappy, antisocial idiot of a king meets an exuberant orangehead who, unfortunately, is just as much an idiot of a king. With an unlikely alliance formed between two disjointed kingdoms, the greatest miracle in millennia is about to occur in a tainted and decaying world.

1. Prologue: Edelweiss

A/N: I decided to revise the posted chapters. It's not as detailed as before, but there's a reason for it.

* * *

><p>First meeting, from ravenhead's perspective. The child king learns how to take things on by himself.

A thirteen-year-old boy sat at the edge of a fountain, staring into the water and splashing it with his bare hand for what seemed like the hundredth time. The world seen through the youngster's eyes was exceptionally dark and morose as he stared dully into the water. He sat right in the middle of the bustling main square of the town, pointedly ignoring anyone who tried to talk to him. The sparks and life that commonly fills the eyes of the young folk in the jovial town was absent in his own dim, vacant ones.

As the bustling town life progressed around him, the young boy sat there in his own timeless bubble. His thoughts were stranded in a faraway place where everything was still faultless and invulnerable; someplace where his parents, the happened king and queen of Edelweiss, were still alive. Only, they weren't, and the young prince was left with an ambiguous party of regents, and responsibilities that were far beyond the capabilities of a mere child. He only ever had his parents by his side, so what now, when even the ones he was supposed to trust were attempting to be rid of him? Was there even a

point in trying at all?

[_The_ _answer._]

He met a boy that day; a young fellow whose eyes were buoyant and spirited unlike his own.

Kageyama was just wandering about after a whole afternoon of staring into oblivion by the fountain when he came upon a lake clearing. He didn't know how he got there and didn't really care; but when he saw the myriad of stones at the rim of the water, the ravenhead just couldn't help himself.

He let his mind wander back to the tranquil evenings when his father would bring him out to the castle pond to skip stones. Kageyama learned by watching, ambitiously trying to catch up to his father; his mother would always clap and cheer every time he succeeded.

The stone that was just thrown skipped four times before sinking into the water. As if on cue, someone started clapping behind him. Kageyama widened his eyes.

He heard a whisper. '_Wishes are not merely words of longing. Miracles are not just far-flung lies._'

It was as if all of his prayers were finally answered in that one moment when he heard the familiar clapping, in such a way that he was almost too accustomed to. Kageyama immediately turned around, but was instead met with enthusiastic eyes that contrasted with the earnest ones in his memories.

"That was amazing! I never knew rocks could skip that far! Could you do it again!?" The stranger declared.

Kageyama felt a flare of anger and annoyance. How could he have been so naive? It was just a kid.

'_When two people meet, a chemical synergy occurs._'

A kid, he had thought; but oh, so wrong he was.

The two of them were sitting side-by-side on the rather large rock. The ball of energy that eagerly applauded him just moments ago was suddenly a child with hollow, distant eyes that only saw recollections of a painful past.

And suddenly, words were flowing out of the boy's mouth. "You know..this is my favorite place to go whenever I'm feeling down. The scenery is rather calming." Kageyama thought he must have been talking to himself, but he was too caught up in his own thoughts to care.

"I'm glad you like it too." The boy continued on despite the brunette's lack of attention on him. "Well, at least it seems like you do."

Oh, so he was talking to him. This time though, Kageyama didn't know what to say.

And yet, the boy continued to speak. "My parents died just a few

years ago from a disease..but I guess memories just last longer when you lose something important to you." Kageyama frowned, but the boy didn't stop. "I was just thinking of the time when my mom told me a story about a young orphan boy who overcame all the challenges he faced despite his loneliness. He went on a journey and met lots of people who really cared about him." He was just staring now. Um..what? "And in the end..it was all because he didn't give up!"

That's it, Kageyama thought; he must be crazy. But as much as he wanted to scoot away, Kageyama found that he couldn't. Instead, he opted to ask, "Why are you telling me this?"

The boy frowned in confusion. "Um..because you seemed really sad?" He said it as though it were a question, as if he too, was questioning his own actions.

Kageyama didn't get it; he didn't get why this kid suddenly told him about his past; he didn't get what he was supposed to say; he didn't get why this kid was even talking to him in the first place! As much as he didn't understand though, the ravenhead felt a strange fondness for the kid. That's why he suddenly had the urge to say something.

But instead of words, what came out of his mouth was a lame, "Huh?"

The ball of energy was suddenly back. His face lit up and he began to explain. "The way you were gazing out at the waterâ€"it seemed as if you were thinking of something really sad. You kind of reminded me of myself. That's why I thought I should share my story with youâ€"to tell you that you shouldn't give up!"

Kageyama felt a spark of anger, suddenly remembering the power struggles back at home. Giving up? What does this kid even know? He had never even wanted to be a part of it, so why should he even try?

The ravenhead argued. "'Not giving up' is easier said than done."

The kid's expression suddenly intensified. "Aren't you saying that because you didn't try yet?"

[_His __answer._]

Behind his frown, Kageyama flared with anger. Why was he being told off by a kid? It made him feel so stupid for even listening in the first place; for even coming here to sulk in the first place. Yes, sulking was pathetic. He felt _pathetic_. If he had really fallen so low to let a _kid_ reprimand him, then certainly he was pretty pathetic. He surely had too much pride for his own good, but in all honesty, the kid's words had struck a chord within him.

In his ire, Kageyama just nodded to show that he got the point; then, he stormed off. He still felt angry and embarrassed, but with renewed determination set in his eyes, the ravenhead made his way back home. 'Giving up' was no longer a term in his dictionary.

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><p>AN: Ah, our antisocial little king. Now that this is done, laziness may ensue for a while.**

**Please feel free to leave a review! (à«€(Î„â-žà,´à±ªâ-ÿà,´â€µ)Êf)
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2. Prologue: Magnolia

A/N: Tears are falling. The Haikyuu! fandom needs more love over here an .

**I realized that there are actually many ways to interpret the meaning of flowers, but this is what I generally came up with:
****Gladiolus**** is an August birth flower that symbolizes strength, honor, remembrance, and sincerity. You can interpret this however you want.**

Kingdom of **Edelweiss**** â€" symbolizes daring, courage and noble purity.**

Kingdom of **Magnolia**** â€" symbolizes nobility, perseverance and love of nature**

Honestly, the reason for all of these flower names was mainly because I couldn't find better names for places and such. Haha, feel free to ask questions though!

* * *

><p>Magnolia

Magnolia was known for quite a number of sites, and the great castle was among the first few that stood out at the top of that list. The great wall of the Magnolian castle was high and sturdy, taller than even twice the height of the tallest guard tower in the kingdom. Along the outward side of the wall were designs created by none other than the residents of the main townâ€"a town that stretched for miles and with even acres of farmland beyond that. Inside the castle walls stood a mighty castle that must have taken decades of renovations to finally look as it did.

A small girl with twin orange pigtails stalked behind a figure that was quietly tip-toeing his way down one of the many great hallways of the castle.

"Brother, brother! Where are you going today?" She suddenly asked.

The young boy jumped before turning around and kneeled down so that he was at eye level with the girl. "Shh! Natsu, if you speak so loudly, they're going to find out!" He whispered.

Then, he looked both ways down the hall before turning back to her, "I'm going to _that_ place again. If you promise not to tell anyone, then I'll bring you back a souvenir, alright?"

The girl's face seemed to light up as she nodded vigorously. "Yes!" She accidentally said out loud, but quickly covered her mouth with

both hands.

"Right. Shhhhhh" She whispered quietly.

The young boy grinned and petted her head gently. "Good girl."

"Good luck, big brother! I'll tell uncle and aunty that you went to the training barracks if they ask me where you are!"

The boy glanced over with a big grin and a quick "Thanks!" before scurrying off to the kitchen, where an entry and exit door for the servants was located.

This boy is Hinata Shouyou, the thirteen-year old crown prince of Magnolia. He often sneaks out by himself in order to 'explore' the outlands of his beloved kingdom. Honestly, his almost-daily excursions irritated all of the servant-residents of the castle to no end, because even with the large number of eyes inside of the castle, it did not seem to be enough to hold him back. But despite his obnoxiousness, the young prince always found a way to be forgiven. It could be because of the fact that he remembers each and every one of his servants' names as if it was the most casual task in the world, or maybe it was because of his casual cheeriness and his smile that seemed to bring light to even the darkest corners of the great castle.

And now, the young prince was once again sneaking off to one of his so-called 'adventures'.

He quickly snuck inside the kitchen and climbed up the stone wall to one of his favorite hiding places where he hid his usual clothing and sack, used whenever he went out for his adventures. After he changed into the clothing, he went inside the pantry to take one loaf of leftover bread and walked out of the backdoor that would lead him to the outside world.

The weather that day was absolutely perfect for his journey. There was not a single cloud in the sky, and it made Hinata wonder if anyone else who woke up early enough would notice that the color of the morning sky in Magnolia had the same color as the hydrangea that grew in the local flower garden that he frequented.

The short prince, now dressed in a simple long-sleeved tan shirt and brown trousers, stopped for a moment to admire the beauty of the world outside of the castle walls and sighed in content. This was particularly one of the reasons why he loved going out to explore.

But before he got too caught up with the thoughts of the outside world, Hinata decided that he should hurry to retrieve his horse from the flower field that lay a short distance beyond a short hill. During one of his many excursions, Hinata had purchased his own horse and trained it himself so that it would come to him whenever he whistled for it. He decided that the flower field beyond the hill would be the best place to hide his horse. The abandoned field was surrounded by a large perimeter of wooden fencing that could keep unwanted _visitors_ out and keep his horse in one place. Since he figured that he wouldn't have enough time to tend to his horse all the time, he had entrusted one of the older village boys with his horse to ensure that it was well-fed and groomed.

He named his horse after one of his favorite flowers, Protea, which symbolizes diversity and courage. It was actually quite a befitting name for his spotted horse. Hinata had learned from the traveling horse merchant that Protea had had a harsh life before he got to where he was. The poor thing was only a baby calf when it was separated from his mother and brought to a traveling circus. There, he witnessed firsthand the cruelties of hard labor before he was dumped by the road after growing weak and sick from the mistreatment. Despite all of the hardships of an ever-changing environment, Protea had lived through all of it and grew even stronger and braver by the day. Touched beyond words, Hinata made the decision that if he was going to choose a horse, he would choose one that would appreciate companionship and compassion just as much as he would. And thus the name Protea, for all the astounding changes that the horse went through, and for the irreplaceable courage that it had obtained through those hardships.

After he saddled his horse, Hinata climbed on his companion and truly began his journey. He started off slow at first to adjust to the feeling of riding and to enjoy the scenery of the field that stretched for acres; then, he slowly sped up in order to reach his destination faster.

Hinata had often come to the town of Anthurium with his parents when he was younger. Anthurium was the alliance town between the two kingdoms, Edelweiss and Magnolia. Oftentimes, the leaders of both kingdoms would hold private meetings in the town to improve their relations as the co-rulers of the land of Karasuno, and to discuss trade as well as other issues.

The young prince had always enjoyed those trips. After the meetings were over, his father would always bring him to various places in the town and tell him stories about his younger years—something he never had the time to do when they were back at home.

Hinata explored the whole town, trying to remember what sort of things he used to do with his father. And when evening came, the young boy decided to head to the place his father had never failed to bring him to—the Hydrangea Lake. He followed an all-too-familiar path through the main road and stopped just as he reached the last lamplight. Then, he followed an almost-hidden side path, through the woods, and finally he saw a lake clearing.

The name of the lake was quite befitting for the scenery. Hydrangea was a name not only given to the lake for the numerous blue-violet flowers that grew in shrubs in the surrounding area—it also speaks of the beautiful clear waters and the blue rocks below that gave the shallow lake its color.

Swish—|. _Ploop._

Hinata startled a little at the noise and finally noticed that there was a person standing in front of the lake. He watched as the boy stood there, gazing at the water with solemn eyes that seemed to look out far into the distance as he threw a stone into the water with graceful movements. Everything about him seemed so mesmerizing in that one moment. Hinata didn't even realize he started clapping until the boy turned around to look at him.

"That was amazing! I never knew that rocks could skip that far! Could you do it again?" he suddenly asked.

The boy stared at him, a frown slowly forming on his face.

Did he not want him to be there? But after a few moments, the boy just turned around and continued throwing.

Hinata smiled. Maybe it wasn't that he minded his presence after all.

They continued that way for a little while, with Hinata clapping for him every time he threw the stones. But soon, the boy grew tired and decided to sit down on a rock. Hinata, deciding that it would be too awkward to just stand there, sat down as well.

He sighed as he stared out at the lake, mesmerized by the beautiful scenery. The raven-haired boy next to him looked as if he was deep in thought, and whatever he must be thinking of didn't seem to be anything good. Hinata began to wonder, 'Why does the boy remind him so much of himself?' But he knew that even if he asked, the boy wouldn't know the answer either.

Hinata opted to just speak his mind, "You know..this is my favorite place to go whenever I'm feeling down. The scenery is rather calming."

The boy just continued to ignore him, staring into the distance. Hinata didn't mind though, knowing full well how it feels to just want to be left alone when everything in the world seemed to be crumbling around him. He was actually quite fond of this place, and he wouldn't mind sharing it at all.

"I'm glad you like it too." He said, thinking of all those times he would come here by himself to relive the memories he often tried to forget. It hurt too much to remember, but he couldn't let it all fade. And the boy seemed to be on the same train as him. "Well, at least it seems like you do."

Then, he let the memories flow in. His chest started to hurt, thinking of all those times when his father would bring him here. A few years ago, Hinata used to come to this place every day, trying to get away from reality and just live in his memories. But after a while, he finally stopped. He knew he had to move on, and eventually, he did. Still, he would come to Hydrangea Lake every year on the same day so he wouldn't forget. The memories of his dead parents were so precious to him.

A few years ago, on the same day, Hinata's parents had both passed away.

_The king and queen had recently returned from one of their kingdom's oversea trade ports. Unfortunately, a new plague had been going on at that time and they arrived there at just the wrong time. _

_Hinata wasn't even able to say goodbye to his parents, having been given restrictions to not see them because of their sickness. It had all been too sudden for the young prince to handle. And for a while, he was in denial. He kept trying to tell everyone that the two corpses that lay in the coffins were not his parents, because there

was just no way that his parents would fall to just a mere sickness. There was no way, right?_

_Shouyou continued to live within his memories. At first, locking himself in his own room and refusing to talk to anyone. Then, he started sneaking out by himself to various places to 'find' his parents. After several days of going through the same process, he finally realized that his parents were, in fact, dead. _

When he finally decided to come out of his shell, Hinata realized that he wasn't the only one. During his parents' funeral, everyone came to mourn with him. Every family in the kingdom came to pay their respects and each brought Hinata and Natsu a gift to give them strength for their futures. With not only the help of his aunt and uncle, but also the citizens of his kingdom, Hinata was finally able to move on. Young Hinata had decided that day that he was going to live for the sake of those whom he loved: his baby sister Natsu, his aunt and uncle, and his people.

Hinata snapped out of his thoughts, realizing that he wasn't alone.

He suddenly made up his mind to tell the boy his story, "My parents died just a few years ago from a disease, but I guess memories are longer-lasting when you lose something important to you.. I was just thinking of the time when my mom told me a story about a young orphan boy who overcame all the challenges he faced despite of his loneliness. He went on a journey and met a lot of people who genuinely cared for him. And in the end..it was all because he didn't give up!"

The other boy stared at him and asked, "Why are you telling me this?"

Hinata finally realized why the boy reminded him so much of himself. "Because you seemed really sad."

"Huh?" the boy answered.

Then, he opted to tell him, "The way you gazed out at the waterâ€"it seemed as if you were thinking of something really sad. That's why I thought I should share my story with youâ€"to tell you that you shouldn't give up!"

Right, Hinata was only able to make it through in the past because he didn't give up. He wanted the boy, who reminded him so much of himself, to try to overcome his problems too!

But then the boy said, "'Not giving up' is easier said than done."

Hinata automatically took down that statement, knowing full well how tempting it was to just give everything up when he realized that his parents were dead, "But you won't know unless you try. Isn't it because you didn't _try_ yet?"

The boy stared at him in shock, and after a few moments, he replied, "Tch. Yeah..you're right."

But before Hinata could continue, the boy looked at the setting sun

and stood up. Without looking back, he just started to walk off.

Hinata stared at the boy curiously, wondering what exactly the boy was thinking of when he suddenly turned around and said "Thank you". And then he was gone.

Shouyou smiled a little to himself before he stood up and left as well. He left, thinking that the boy would be able to make it through just as he did.

And hopefully, he would be able to meet him again in the future.

3. A Request

****A foregoing history and a prophecy; two mismatched crowns; and a sudden turn of events?****

Kageyama Tobio did not become the king he was overnight. It was the endless days and nights of studying, hard work, and talent all combined together that got him to where he was. He took advantage of anything and everything in order to become good at what he was 'supposed' to do. But the one absolute rule that he learned to set for himself was what kept him going these past five years: to trust no one but himself.

He was a demanding king, and yet he was still a great king. He doesn't listen to anyone's opinions, and yet he was always 'right'. He was more than often unreasonable with his demands, and yet everything always ended up well. Yes, the people are happy as long as he was capable, and they did not really care about how he does it as long as the results are good. And of course, the results were almost always good, just because he demanded so. The only ones who dared to disobey the king were the ones who had way too much pride for their own good.

The eighteen-year-old king sat at his desk, reading and working through piles and piles of documents. Along with his already piling work, he still had to make sure to double-check every single document involving foreign affairs—he couldn't trust anyone else with such important information. Kageyama was in the middle of reading through a document involving trade between nearby towns when a messenger suddenly ran in.

"Y-your majesty! It's an urgent letter from the Magnolia kingdom!"

Kageyama glared at the careless messenger and raised his voice. "Who gave you the permission to enter my office?"

The messenger froze for a moment and immediately went on his knees to beg for forgiveness. "I-I apologize for my rudeness, your Majesty, but I was told to deliver it to you as soon as possible."

"Tsk, just leave it here and leave." The young king said as he focused his attention back to the document.

The messenger did just as he was told and ran out as soon as he

could, afraid of what would happen to him if he ever raised the king's anger. Anyone who was new to the Edelweiss castle would have thought that the castle servants were just eager to do their work, but no, even as a new castle messenger, he already knew from all the rumors that King Kageyama was the last person you would ever want to piss off. Nobody in the castle ever disobeyed the king's orders if they wanted to live, or at the very least, keep their position.

Kageyama read through the rest of the document with an ever-consistent frown on his face before he picked up the letter. "Tsk." He frowned as he read through its content. His hope was that the letter was not really as urgent as the messenger had implied it was, but that was quickly forgotten when he read the words: "_The king of Magnolia requests a formal meeting in three days due time._" Of course, he knew what this was going to be aboutâ€¦

In the current century, many kingdoms had become corrupted due to an unknown force that had spread throughout the world. Twenty years ago, the Great War was ignited in one of the western nations when a strange force suddenly landed in the west and overtook the region. Many countries became involved in battles and invasions all over the world in order to fight the corruption, but it only spread as the battles went on. Not just the corruption, but the battles spread like wildfire as well and nearly destroyed the entire world. After six long years of death and destruction, the seven remaining nations were forced to sign a strained treaty to end the war. But every kingdom knew that the peace wasn't going to last long, not when all of them were in desperate need of resources after the destruction of their lands. Shortly after the war had ended, a great vision was seen, foreshadowing a seven-year drought that was soon to come. Sadly, Karasuno was the only nation that never took part in the Great War, thus, they were the only ones who will be capable of withstanding the foreseen drought that will soon devastate the world. Throughout the years, the power-hungry nations plotted to overtake Karasuno for their untouched resources, but all of them failed when they had attacked alone against the two powerful kingdoms.

In the recent years, several kingdoms were banding together in order to overtake Karasuno for survival, and the corruption that had once ignited in the western nations had only continued to spread. If the two powerful kingdoms of Karasuno did not band together to fight against the corrupted nations, then their doom was inevitable.

The Kingdom of Magnolia had strong offensive power that is capable of destroying an entire region in one wave of attack, but what they lacked was defense. On the other hand, Edelweiss' army had impregnable defenses, capable of withstanding any large-scale attacks done by the surrounding kingdoms. The current Edelweiss army is even said to have the greatest defensive and offensive battle strategies. If you put the two of them together, then their forces would be impenetrableâ€¦that is, only if they agree to join together.

Yes, King Kageyama knew that, but he had never been capable of trusting anyone after the former king and queen passed away five years ago. Especially _not_ after a certain incident that had occurred shortly after his parents' death. But he knew that it was inevitable for the good of his kingdom. Still, he would have to meet with the king of Magnolia before he made any decisions.

* * *

><p>Rumors have it that the king of Magnolia was a really great fighter, gifted with considerable athletic ability and wits. It was once said that he had once even taken down a whole band of thieves during one of his expeditions on his own. Kageyama, having never met the king in person, had imagined a great and strong figure of the illustrious man he had only heard ofâ€"what he didn't expect was the short orange-haired boy that happily pranced into the throne room two hours after the supposed meeting time.<p>

Of course, Kageyama was pissed when he first saw the boy. On top of making him wait, the king of Magnolia actually dared to send a substitute to greet him? He would have never imagined that the supposed great king of Magnolia was a short boy who didn't look much older than a teenager. "This is a fucking joke. Now tell me the truth, where is your king?" was the very first thing that left his mouth after the short boy's arrival.

"W-what are you talking about? I'm the king of Magnolia!" the small boy frowned and pointed at himself.

"Hah?" Kageyama blinked once, twice. No, this must be a joke. There is no way that the young boy standing before him was capable of leading the great Magnolian armies through countless of victories, much less an entire kingdomâ€"was what Kageyama thought until he saw the unmistakable Magnolian emblem on the young boy's breast plate. Well, and the crown of course. And so, Kageyama, having only just realized that he had stood up in his confusion, went to sit back down on the throne and composed himself.

"Fine, I believe you," he replied, eyeing the short boy's crown and attire, "but now you must explain, why are you late?" Kageyama asked with his eyes narrowed.

"I-uhh..I got lost, because.." the short king muttered, then turned his face away. "I came here by myself."

Kageyama's eyes widened for a moment. He had once heard that the king of Magnolia was bold and reckless, but he didn't know that he was a fool as well! Logically speaking, what kind of king would put his own life in danger and walk into foreign territory without so much as a single backup? Apparently, he would.

But instead of becoming angry or laughing at such a foolish act, Kageyama could only be amused. "You are a foolish king, but engaging as well." He decided to point out.

This earned him a shocked look and a pointed finger from the other king. "Y-you! What kind of king are you to speak of others that way!?" The young king glared at him.

Kageyama smirked in response and asked, "Tell me then, what are you here for?"

Despite his anger, Hinata understood the importance of this meeting and composed himself. "A request," he said with a determined voice, "request for an alliance between our two kingdoms." The short king held his ground and forced himself to look at Kageyama directly in the eyes, "Trouble is brewing in the surrounding regions. We have to

make a decision before it's too late."

Kageyama frowned at this. "I must praise you for your bravery, foolish king, but I will never acknowledge you." He said this because he knew that forming an alliance was much easier said than done. Judging by the way they had interacted with each other so far, there was no telling how things would work out if they ever joined sides. The most important thing in an alliance is mutual trust, and if the two of them cannot agree, then there would be no point in joining sides. But still, Kageyama knew he had no choice but to try. After all, it was for the sake of his kingdom.

After a period of silence, all the while the two of them glaring at each other, Kageyama suddenly raised his hand, or rather, three fingers.

"Stay here for three months. After that, I will decide whether or not you and your kingdom should be trusted."

Hinata understood the meaning behind that request. What the other king meant was that, in order to establish a bond and trust between their kingdoms, the two of them would have to get to know one another and try to understand each other. It also means that he was given a chance to prove himself.

Upon hearing the request, his thoughts of the Edelweiss king changed, if only a little. Smiling to himself, he replied, "If that's what it takes to earn your trust, then I accept! I'll do it, you understand?" And with that, the king of Magnolia stormed off to god-knows-where, leaving behind him a frowning raven-haired king.

4. Reminiscent

****A curious king and revisited memories.****

Hinata Shouyou did not sleep well last night. Or rather, he just could not sleep. It wasn't because he was scared of being in foreign territory alone or even the fact that he would have to stay that way for three months. In fact, it was quite the opposite.

"Alright, it's time to explore!" The zealous king narrated, jumping high enough to hit his head at the doorway.

He was dressed in one of his favorite court wear—"a full-length collared white shirt and black knee-length tights, complete with a gold brocade black and orange jerkin"—befitting of his home colors—and a pair of calf-high leather boots.

Hinata could barely contain his excitement, rubbing his now swollen forehead as he looked outside a nearby window from the high tower. After all, he had always wanted to explore places outside of his own kingdom, even if he was only allowed to do so inside the castle grounds—"his uncle said that it was "for safety reasons".

The Edelweiss castle was, condensed in one word, extravagant. The enormous castle, much like the king (figuratively), stood above everything else, and was divided into many different sections. The tallest two towers were reserved solely for the king, the whole front section—which was also the largest tower—was mainly reserved for

important guests and nobles, and the other towers consisted mostly of empty rooms that were only partially filled by servants and castle workers.

Outside of the castle was a grandiose garden that had hundreds, or maybe even thousands of species of plants, and a clear water pond set in the middle of a maze pattern of bushes—and this was only inside one part of the inner walls. As the castle was divided into different sections, so were the inner walls—each of them even completed with its own gate. On top of that, the Edelweiss castle itself was amongst the top 'views' of the world—the first of its kind to be built, not on top of, but along a mountain, and much less, the Karasuno mountain—the tallest mountain that has been known to exist.

Above all else, Hinata was most fascinated by the access system of the towers. The residents of the castle each had limited access to the different types of gates depending on their emblem. For example, a low-ranked castle servant with a blank emblem could only access the front section of the castle and the servants' quarters. Hinata, of course, given the Anthurium flower emblem, was allowed in every part of the castle other than the king's towers.

Hinata decided that the first place he was going to explore was the garden, since he had always had a strange fascination for flowers. It is not—he had to repeat to himself twice—because he was afraid of the suspicious-looking locked doors that lined the interior castle hallways. Needless to say, the young king's curiosity would probably or eventually lead him to find out what was behind those locked doors sometime during his three-month stay. Despite that, the poor teenager had only managed to get himself lost.

After Hinata spent the entirety of the morning exploring the guest tower—not including the suspicious locked doors—he finally made it out to the gardens. He was very surprised at first to see the diversity of the plants that were available in just one portion of the garden. They ranged from not only trees and flowers, but to foreign medicinal herbs and even some rarities of the world as well. What was even more amazing was how, despite being in the mountains, the garden had species of plants that only survived in harsh or extreme conditions—the Edelweiss kingdom flower itself being one of them. The garden was set up in such a way that the plants received the condition closest to its original setting by making use of the different sides of the mountain, the altitude, the humidity, and even the angles of sunlight. Some of the plants were grown in special greenhouses that had specific temperatures. If Hinata's kingdom was a sea of flowers, with seemingly endless fields of both wild and cultured plants, then the Edelweiss garden was a treasure trove—a culmination of different species of plants and surprises awaiting in each volume of the terrace.

He spent the whole evening trying to find his way through the maze that was located in the middle of the garden to the pond. Never in his life had Hinata Shouyou felt as lost as he did. The maze seemed to be full of unexpected twists and turns that only led him to dead ends. Worst, all of the bushes—each trimmed to near perfection—all looked the same to the poor king. Unfortunately, Hinata was too short to even try to glance above the eight feet walls of bushes that aligned in every which way, even when he jumped.

The scorching afternoon sun continued to torment the young king as he

wandered in what seemed like circles. Hinata was just about ready to resign himself and start saying his prayers in prospect of spending the rest of his life in the maze, but eventually (and surprisingly), he did make it to the pond. After hours upon hours of wandering like a lost lamb, the beautiful scenery of the pond brought him respite from his recent ordeal.

Edelweiss pond was one of the most well-known sites in the entire kingdom. Although the body of water was quite small, taking up less than 600 feet span across, the naturally formed pond had the clearest water due to the flowing mountain rain that flowed there in a man-made irrigation.

Hinata took a moment to admire the clear reflections in the water before he spotted a person skipping stones into the pond. He observed the precise movements of the person's arm, as if not wasting a single movement, and the way the stone skipped fiveâ€”no six times before it finally sank into the water. From where he was standing, it was impossible to see the person's face since he had his back turned towards him, but Hinata suddenly felt a sense of nostalgia at the situation, and without a second thought, he had started clapping.

The person immediately stiffened and turned around, a scowl immediately forming on his face. Hinata recognized the frowning man and proceeded to find somewhere to hide, afraid that he might have angered the king of Edelweiss. He took immediate refuge behind a nearby tree and peeked out before asking, "D-did I do something wrong?" Sweat from anxiety formed on his temple as he pondered what exactly he could have done to make the other king look so angry.

Before he came to the Edelweiss castle, Hinata had heard a lot of horrifying tales about the king of Edelweiss from rumors that were flying about. Things like how the king had powers to curse people and bring them misfortune if they ever do him wrong, or how he tended to randomly throw people into the deepest, darkest part of the underground prisons as he saw fit. Surely, such misfortunes could never befall a fellow king such as himself, but Hinata's instincts had told him otherwiseâ€”that there was danger up aheadâ€”when he saw the king's expression.

"You.." The raven-haired king mumbled something incoherent as he looked at him pointedly, probably since Hinata was a bit too far away to hear. "H-Hah? What?" Hinata at least had some modesty to ask, but was only met with a brief moment of awkward silence. At least the king did not seem to be angry anymoreâ€”his scowl suddenly turned into just slightly upturned lips. "No, never mind" The raven head said and turned back to continue skipping stones into the pond. Hinata visibly relaxed, his shoulders turning limp again, and continued to watch the male. Now that he had the time to think about it instead of worrying about self-preservation, Hinata seriously began wondering why the situation felt so oddly nostalgic.

The other king stopped after a while when he got too tired of bending down and sat down on a rather large rock to pick up more stones by his feet. After a few minutes of just watching him, Hinata had finally gotten comfortable enough to sit down next to the king of Edelweiss. The moments continued to pass by in silence, but he actually found that he enjoyed the silence despite not knowing the

king very well and even found it surprising how he already felt a comfortable familiarity with the raven-haired male. Surprising, because just a few minutes ago, he was so sure that the king was going to kill him.

As if he was waiting for the perfect timing, Hinata suddenly asked aloud. "Why do I get the feeling that this happened before?"

Hinata noted that the raven-haired king glanced at him for a moment before the man asked him back, "Why are you asking as if I know the answer?"

Hinata shrugged. "I don't know, but I have the feeling that you feel the same way."

The taller boy turned away as if making a point to ignore him and Hinata only stared at him. A brief period of uncomfortable silence dragged on until the king finally resigned and simply replied, "I do."

Suddenly, Kageyama stood up and began to skip more stones, startling Hinata. But this time, he at least made the effort to continue the conversation. "I remember an annoying kid who interrupted one of my rare peaceful evenings out by the Hydrangea pond."

"Hey, then you're that kid from that time." Hinata stood as well, index finger pointing right at his face.

Kageyama frowned, annoyed by the shorter boy's sudden intrusion to his personal space. "Watch it." He said as he shoved his hand out of the way. But as he processed what Hinata's words meant, he suddenly grabbed onto Hinata's arm. "Wait, was that you?"

Hinata wondered why the king looked so desperate at that moment and stared back, wide-eyed. But before Hinata could say anything else, they heard a bell toll in the background. Kageyama reluctantly let go of Hinata's arm and turned to make his way back to the castle without a word. The shorter boy just continued to stare at his back until he disappeared behind the bushes.

Wait, why did he feel as if he was forgetting something?

It suddenly struck to him that he didn't know how to find his way out of the maze, but unfortunately, the king was already long gone. "Wait! Wait for me!" He had tried pointlessly, but was only met with silence.

The rest of his evening was spent in a fruitless attempt in finding the exit of the maze. He finally made it out when his two personal guards began to search for him after realizing that their king was probably lost. Again.

The rest of his night was spent eating a late supper by himself (since the Edelweiss king was obviously too impatient to wait for him), and another failed attempt at making his way back to his room.

Hinata found a flower right in front of his door and wondered briefly if he had made it to the wrong place. He looked around, the long and dark hallway stretching on either side of him, and sincerely hoped

that it really was his room. Hinata bent down to pick up the flower. And just then, a soft thud sounded somewhere to his dexter in the eerie corridor. The auburn-haired king squeaked before practically kicking the door openâ€”and immediately recognizing that it was his room, slammed the door shut and jumped onto the bed, ready to defend against the unfathomable. Only, there was no supernatural existence and he was only met with silence.

Hinata breathed a sigh of relief when he realized he was the only one there. Having always been scared of the dark, he was glad that his caretakers had precedently lit up the candles that were scattered throughout the room and the oil lamp on the side of his bed. With the prior incident in the back of his mind, the flower in his right hand suddenly became the prime of his interests. He held it out under the lamp light; a petite pink carnation lay on his palm.

A flicker of surprise was shown on the young king's face as he remembered what the pink carnation signifies. To Hinata, endowing such a modest floweret is equitable to saying 'I will never forget you.'

That night, Hinata Shouyou did not sleep well. It was as if the pink blossom had bestowed upon him a spell akin to its meaning; thoughts of a raven-haired male perennial in his mind.

5. Acceptance

* * A/N: * *

****I sincerely apologize for taking so long to update. My whole summer was all about laziness and distractions. Summer engineering academy and internship did not help with my motivation to write either.****

[illegible]

****Anyway, I hope you will enjoy the update!****

* * *

>p>In the eyes of every resident, he saw expectation. If not of grief, he saw envy, anger and desperation. Kageyama wanted them to stop! But the more he hoped, the more their gazes burned. Why couldn't they understand?

_He searched and searched for a way to relief the torment, but everything around him remained pitch-dark. Only months later, he felt his world brighten for the first time when he met a boy by the Hydrangea Lake.

He continued to pursue the light as if his life depended on it.

_On the first night after their meeting, Kageyama had a dream where he wasn't alone, where he could smile and laugh without any consequences behind it. And although the dreams he had every night

are hopeful, he hated them. _

He pondered every day why all of them consisted of a boy with auburn hair. Before he realized it, they had already altered his way of thinking and the way he viewed things. Soon, Kageyama even began to think that he still had a chance in happiness.

But how unfortunate that he never saw him again.

_No matter what the occasion, Kageyama always waited. He would ride his horse to the lake whenever he had free time, always expecting the late arrival of a certain orangehead. But no matter how long he waited or how often he went, Kageyama was always alone. No matter how much he hoped to see him again, he was never there. _

Kageyama could still never hope to get away from his uncle's grasp.

Two years ago, Kageyama had given up on waiting. By that time, even the dreams of auburn hair and spirited eyes had abandoned him. He had lost all the hope that once existed in his dreams and surrendered himself to the darkness that would certainly overwhelm him.

Maybe, he thought, that was why he was suddenly so ambitious. The words had left his mouth before he could even rethink it. _"Stay here for three months. After that, I will decide whether or not you and your kingdom should be trusted." _ Something about the young king had caught his attention-his reckless and bold nature, his auburn hair, his radiant presence, and the way he gazed up brazenly from below. Hinata Shouyou was frighteningly similar to the boy from the Hydrangea Lake.

Their brief encounter at the garden pond had only reaffirmed his guess.

Kageyama awoke with a start.

Years after he had forgotten, fleeting dreams of tousled orange hair had come back to taunt him. The visions he saw in his sleep gave the impression of a slap to the face, as if to snap the comprised, built-up emotions back into his mind. It left him feeling really disoriented and frustrated.

As dawn broke over the valley, Kageyama looked outside his window and gazed at his empty courtyard. Overhead, the clouds were greedily taking over the vast expanse of the sky, in the same manner of how a certain orangehead had been to his mind lately. Only two days had passed since the Magnolian king's arrival and Kageyama was already feeling the slightest hint of a headache, of which he could only expect to grow worse. Imagine the migraines he would have by the end of the week! Really, he would very much rather be somewhere far away from the castle so as not to catch even a glimpse of the short king. But he knew he couldn't.

Viewing at the overbearing haze again, Kageyama finally decided that he should take a break.

Why yes, cooping up in his tower for a few solitary days seemed like a fine plan at the time. At least he wouldn't have to face the origin of his problems.

Not yet anyway.

* * *

><p>Hinata didn't really find it odd at first that Kageyama never showed up for supper. He didn't even expect to see him in the garden again. But strange it was indeed that he hadn't seen the king at all for six days already!<p>

He searched three times each day in all of the areas that were accessible to him. He even inquired the palace guards of their king's whereabouts, but the most they knew was that their king had not left the castle grounds in the past week.

There was only one place he had not searched yet and only one place he was not allowed to go inside of the castle premises-the King's towers.

Being as stubborn as he was, Hinata decided that he had no choice but to sneak in. It was all Kageyama's fault anyway, for leaving him in the gardens with an endless stream of questions and yet no way to contact him at all in the past couple of days. The questions only allowed themselves to build. And Hinata, for the first time in his life, had a headache from thinking so much.

He went past the gateway to the king's towers as though he was sneaking into the kitchen to steal food for one of his midnight reconnaissance. Except, there weren't any guards around, being the king's towers and all. Nor were there anyone in the premises in general. Yet, Hinata continued to sneak across the front lawn until he reached the entrance way, jumping from behind one object to the next.

Definitely not suspicious.

What stood before him was a tall, tall wall. The door was locked and he was left with no choice but to climb through one of the windows in the back. And despite his exhaustion, he managed to cause a ruckus.

Kageyama heard him.

Kageyama heard him and rushed to the back, thinking he must have been a thief-obviously not a very good one at that. The tall king seized his anelace and quietly walked toward his estimated basis of the noise. Ever so quietly, he unsheathed his dagger slightly, turned the corner and saw-

"Hinata Shouyou?"

Hinata had landed on his bottom. It had taken him a while to climb up the stone wall, but had he grabbed for the edge of the window rather than the tree branch right underneath it, thrn maybe he wouldn't have found himself in such a predicament.

Kageyama noticed the broken tree. Then, he looked down at the windblown orange hair and tangled limbs, and finally, at the woeful eyes of the 'thief'.

He already felt an oncoming headache at the sight, but still reached out his hand to help the boy up.

Hinata recoiled, expecting that he was going to be hit. Who wouldn't be mad if they saw that their visitor had tried to trespass into their territory and worse-ended up breaking a few things in the process?

However, a few moments passed on with none of the expected pain. Hinata slowly peeked open his eye and saw that the raven-head was staring at him expectantly, with his right hand struck out stiffly.

Remaining in the same huddled position, Hinata gazed at the owner of the hand and dumbly responded, "Uh?"

Fidgeting slightly with his hand outstretched, Kageyama's social awkwardness decided to kick in right then. "Hand. Um, yours." He replied just as dumbly, looking at anything that was not Hinata's eyes.

Resultant of the awkward atmosphere, Hinata also directed his gaze sidelong and reached to clasp his hand with the king's. A moment later, Kageyama helped him to stand, but atmospheric tenseness only continued.

â€|..

A young bird nearby just took its first flight. The water in the canal flowed and the tree branches swayed with the occasional wind. Hinata and Kageyama continued to banter on forth with their absent of sound.

Unable to bear the silence any longer, they suddenly bursted simultaneously:

>"-Can I ask you something?" (Hinata)<p>

"-I have something to tell you." (Kageyama)

The two of them looked up expectantly at each other, urging the other to talk first with mere glances.

Another bird took flight. The water in the canal still flowed and the tree branches still swayed with the occasional wind. Except this time, after a brief interval of silence, Kageyama spoke up.

"Let's go to the garden." He said, and turned around as he did so.

Hinata almost nodded his head before he realized that the action would not be seen and shouted a 'Yeah!' before he trailed after the king.

The walk to the garden was as silent as one would expect. Kageyama walked briskly through a path beneath the tree branches and Hinata faltered behind with his smaller steps. They didn't stop until they reached the garden, but not even that helped with the silence.

It was only after a while of sitting absently later that Hinata realized that he would have to initiate the conversation.

"L-like I was saying earlier, I have a few questions for you." He finally said. But in actuality, few was really underestimating it.

"Then just ask" Kageyama deadpanned.

Hinata seemed to contemplate for a while what he was going to ask first, expression screwing into what seemed to be his 'thinking hard' face. Squeezing his eyes shut, he finally asked.

"Was it you?"

Silence.

Kageyama frowned in confusion.

"Huh?"

Hinata, realizing that his question might have been a bit too vague, asked again. "Uh-I mean, was it you who left the carnation in front of my room?"

Kageyama looked at him with almost indifference, raised his brow. "Why would you think it was me?"

This time, Hinata frowned. "Well, I thought it would make sense that it was you, since it means 'I will never forget you' and...and we already met!" He suddenly felt embarrassed for assuming that Kageyama would do such a thing. By far, Hinata didn't even have any proof other than that in his own imagination. "But nevermind! You can just forget what I said!"

Kageyama looked away as if pondering something. After a moment, he turned back.

"I guess it's my turn then."

He continued slowly, staring at the ground. "I-I want you to be my..."

Hinata regained his composure and peered at him expectantly, "Yourâ€¦?"

Kageyama's face heated with embarrassment as he started to regret his decision. "M-my.." He squinted his eyes shut as he willed himself to say the last word.

"Friend!"

Kageyama honestly expected to be laughed at; but when he opened his eyes, all he saw was a goofy grin pasted on the orangehead's face.

Despite Kageyama's dopey way of expressing his intentions, Hinata still felt the rapport behind his words. The shorter male beamed at him, "Sure!"

Kageyama let out a sigh of relief. He finally said it. Now all he had to do was turn around and lea-

"But wait!" Hinata suddenly said. "I still want to know why you avoided me last week!"

Kageyama froze.

What was he supposed to say? _Oh, I've been having dreams about you lately and I wasn't sure how I was supposed to deal with it. I haven't seen you for five years and you just suddenly popped up in my life again, so I just needed some time to think._ No way was he going to tell him that.

So instead, Kageyama asked, "Why should you care?"

Hinata's gaze dropped to the floor alongside his hopes. Kageyama thought he looked like a kicked puppy.

"I just...wanted to know."

Kageyama looked down at him as if considering his answer before opening his mouth. Hesitated, and then looked away.

"No." He said, turning to walk away from the dejected boy.

Hinata got lost again.

That stupid Kageyama, leaving him behind in his stupid maze. He should be furious. But as much as he wanted to, he couldn't find it in himself to feel all that much dislike for the boy. Not when they're supposedly friends now.

Well, at least all the torches in the hallway were lit this time, he thought.

After finding his way through the castle, Hinata finally arrived at the hallway where his room was located. He happily skipped his way toward his room in the brightened corridor. But just as he approached the familiar part of the aisle, he noticed that his room door was wide open. There really was no reason for it to be open. His caretakers always made sure to close the door behind them and nobody else would even bother to go inside his room.

Hinata suddenly froze with fear as he imagined what could be inside his now open room.

What if it was a thief? What if someone is trying to kill me? What if...what if it was a ghost!?!

As he let his mind wander to strange hypothesis, Hinata continued to tacitly approach the door with his back pressed against the wall. Due to his short height, he was just able to pass under the torches without so much as brushing his hair through the lit part of the stick. But as he got closer to the room, Hinata could feel his heartbeat increase by the second. He was even considering running away before he realized that he was already at the entryway.

He was actually hyperventilating by then. But considering the effort he took just to get there, the scared boy decided that he could at least glance inside and flee if he deemed that whatever was inside would endanger him. Like a ghost or something.

After a brief pause to take a deep breath, Hinata peeked inside.

Just as he would expect, all the candles in the room were lit. There was no thief, no assassin, and-most relieving of all-no ghost.

But there was a package on his bed. No, not a package, but...a bouquet of flowers?

The bouquet was filled with hyacinth and white tulips, tied up together by a single yellow thread. A symbol of apology.

* * *

><p>Kageyama wasn't really surprised when he found a single white tulip left on his windowsill the next morning.<p>

* * *

><p>Omake

Kageyama: Your hair is tousled orange and your eyes are always so spirited and determined. You speak to me as if you-you already know me. And sometimes, you even say things that I have heard before.

Hinata: Umm...

Kageyama: I know who you are.

Hinata: Say it. Say it out loud.

Kageyama: The boy from the Hydrangea Lake.

Hinata: â€|..

End
file.